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Iran Thought to Soften Position

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WASHINGTON, June 12 — Intelligence analysts said today that they had seen the first tentative signs that Iran might be willing to negotiate a truce in the war with Iraq.

Those signs included hints from Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the fundamentalist Islamic leader, who, they said, has suggested in radio broadcasts for domestic consumption that negotiations might be possible. Those radio transmissions are monitored by United States agencies.

Military analysts said there had been no indications that the long-awaited Iranian military offensive against Iraq would start. Further, they pointed to the absence of retaliation against Saudi Arabia for shooting down an Iranian jet last week.

They noted that an agreement to avoid attacks on civilians in cities seemed to be holding and that officials of each country appeared to suggest to the other's capital that, as one analyst put it, "If you're ready to talk, we might take you up."

"What we see is a willingness to talk and an unwillingness to fight," he said.

He added, however, that "all of this may be entirely ephemeral."

News reports from the region quoted President Saddam Hussein of Iraq as

saying that Iran's offensive would start soon but that Iraq would repel it.

Intelligence analysts in Washington spent much of the spring watching Iran build up its military forces along the front with Iraq opposite the city of Basra.

When the offensive failed to start at the beginning of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan in early June, the analysts were puzzled. Now they say they have begun to see indications that Iran might be edging toward negotiations.

In another development, the Pentagon's chief spokesman, Michael I. Burch, said that only one Iranian F-4 had been shot down by Saudi Arabian F-15 fighters in an engagement 40 miles from the Saudi coast. Saudi officials said then that two Iranian planes had been shot down.

Mr. Burch, in a news briefing, said: "A review of the data now leads us to believe that there was only one F-4 that was shot down. Initially, both our data and that of the Saudis had indicated two."

Mr. Burch also disclosed that the Saudi missile that scored the hit was a Sidewinder, a supersonic heat-seeking missile made by Raytheon.